

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

This application is a continuation under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b) of Application No. 09/127,553 filed August 3, 1998 (the “‘553 Application”), to which Applicant claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 120. Applicants claim priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to Japanese Patent Application Nos. 9-221341 filed August 18, 1997, 9-222389 filed August 19, 1997, and 9-223443 filed August 20, 1997. Certified copies of the applications were filed on October 8, 1998, in the ‘553 Application. Favorable consideration and acknowledgment of the foregoing is earnestly solicited.

Claims 1, 3 through 20, 22 through 30, and 32 through 36 are pending, with Claims 1, 16, 20, 26, 30, and 36 being independent. Claims 16 through 19, 26 through 29, and 36 were allowed. Claims 2, 21, and 31 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 3, 5 through 16, 20, 22 through 26, 29, 30 and 32 through 36 have been amended.

It will be appreciated that, by this amendment, Applicant has effected entry of the unentered Amendment After Final Rejection that was filed October 16, 2003, in the ‘553 Application.

Applicant has attached hereto six Replacement Sheets of formal drawings comprising Figs. 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 13. These Replacement Sheets effect the following changes: (a) Fig. 13 has been labeled as --PRIOR ART--; and (b) Figs. 2, 4, 5, 8, and 9 have been amended to change "TERN" to ---TURN-- (both instances in each figure). These Replacement Sheets were filed on January 23, 2003, in the ‘553 Application.

In the July 16, 2003 final Official Action in the '553 Application, Claims 16 through 19, 26 through 29, and 36 were allowed. Accordingly, allowance of those claims is respectfully requested.

Also Claims 7 through 12, 23, 24, 33, and 34 were objected to and indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. All objections are respectfully traversed. Applicant has respectfully maintained these claims in dependent form, as Applicant earnestly believes that the claims from which they depend will be found allowable.

Furthermore, Claims 20 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 over U.S. Patent No. 5,448,331 (Hamada, et al.). Claims 1, 3 through 6, 13 through 15, 22, 25, 32, and 35 were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over various combinations of Hamada, et al., and U.S. Patent Nos. 6,028,981 (Hirasawa, et al. '981), and 6,236,431 B1 (Hirasawa, et al. '431), and Official Notice. All rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, inter alia, controlling an ON/OFF state of the light projector in accordance with a focus adjustment state of the focus adjustment control means and inhibiting a movement of the optical system before the light projector is turned OFF in a case that the focus adjustment control means completes the adjusting during a time when the light projector is illuminating the object, wherein the focus adjustment control means adjusts a position of the optical system to an in-focus position by continuously moving the optical system as claimed.

Claims 20 and 30 recite, inter alia, controlling an ON/OFF state of the light projector in accordance with a focus adjustment state of the optical system and inhibiting a movement of the optical system before the light projector is turned OFF in a case that the adjusting is completed during a time when the light projector is illuminating the object, wherein

the focus adjustment control step adjust a position of the optical system to an in-focus position by continuously moving the optical system as claimed.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that none of Hamada, et al., Hirasawa, et al. '981, Hirasawa, et al. '431, and Official Notice, even in the proposed combinations, assuming, arguendo, that such could be combined, discloses or suggests at least the above-discussed combinations of claimed features as recited, inter alia, in Claims 1, 20, and 30.

With further reference to Claims 1, 20, and 30, the Official Action cites to cols. 3 and 15 of Hamada, et al., and Applicant notes that Hamada, et al. discloses, e.g., auxiliary light emission (e.g., Fig. 24). However, Applicant respectfully submits that such disclosure constitutes neither a description nor a suggestion of the claimed features. Applicant respectfully submits that by means of such features, the present invention may addresses a problem of a focusing system (such as, e.g., a TVAF system) that always keeps an in-focus state by continuously moving the optical system, i.e., after an electronic flash device is turned on and a focus lens position is adjusted to an in-focus position by an AF function, if the electronic flash device is turned off while the AF function is in operation, the focus evaluation value changes due to changes in illuminance of the object (see, e.g., p. 6, lines 10-16 of the subject specification).

Still further, the taking in the Official Action of Official Notice including the assertions that claimed features are known is respectfully traversed under MPEP 2144.03 in the absence of a cited reference.


In addition, it is respectfully submitted that there has been no showing of any indication of motivation in the cited documents that would lead one having ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the above-discussed claimed features.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from independent claims discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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